

American Observer

A free, virtuous, and enlightened people must know well the great principles and causes on which their happiness depends.
—James Monroe

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FEBRUARY 27, 1939

Boss Rule Prevails In Many U. S. Cities

Control by Machine Politics Prevents Honest and Efficient Government

IMPROVEMENTS ARE NOTED

Many Communities Have Succeeded in Making Progress by Active Interest of Citizens

As a general rule, people are more actively interested in national or international affairs than in the problems of their local community. The appointment of a new Supreme Court justice or the debate over foreign policy stirs up more interest than the actions of the city mayor or a projected recreational center at home. The diplomatic intrigues in Europe or the war in China holds greater fascination for them than corruption in the city government or a dispute over an educational program.

Yet local problems are of vital importance to every citizen. Each family is closely affected by the activities of its town, city, or county. If the business of the local government is handled well, the citizens of the community are less likely to be preyed upon by criminals. Their property is safer. Their schools are better. They are guarded against the ravages of preventable disease. Their roads and streets are well maintained. They have the benefit of parks, playgrounds, and hospitals. They have an adequate and sanitary water supply. They are protected against fire hazards. Conditions are maintained which make mightily for the welfare and happiness of all the members of the community.

Local Problems

If the local government is badly managed, as it is in many American cities, such advantages as have been named are not found. The people are burdened by wasteful government, unjust taxes, and preventable crimes and disease. The schools are poor and nearly all the public services suffer. Most of the national events which attract far more attention affect the people of the nation less deeply than does the conduct of the public business in their own community.

Despite this fact, many citizens who are really public spirited, or who pay attention to national affairs and international relations, ignore the activities of their local government. That accounts largely for the fact that many of our cities and towns are badly governed. They are not all poorly governed, to be sure. There are many cities where the most public-spirited citizens take an active interest in politics, where men and women whose chief concern is public welfare are ordinarily elected to office. There are cities which comparatively recently have made rapid strides in the direction of honest and efficient government. New York City, the metropolis of the nation, has made decided progress in this direction lately. Cincinnati is a model of honest and efficient administration. And so is Milwaukee. Other towns and cities, large and small, could be added to the roll of honor.

But many other cities of the country, probably a majority of them, are governed by professional politicians who do not represent the best elements of their communities and who are concerned more with personal gain and power than with the public good.

(Concluded on page 8)



COURTESY GARRISON FILM DISTRIBUTORS, INC.

MEXICAN FACES

In recent years aspects of Mexican life have been brilliantly, if not always impartially, portrayed in motion pictures. The scene above is from "The Wave," which dealt with the problems of peasant fishermen.

What the Students Think

By WALTER E. MYER

On page 6 of this issue of THE AMERICAN OBSERVER are found the returns of the second poll of opinion taken among the readers of this paper and its sister publication, the *Weekly News Review*. As in the first poll, the response was immediate and enthusiastic. Tabulated returns from more than 100,000 students have come into our offices. We attach particular significance to this second poll because, unlike the first, it deals with problems of immediate interest or concern to the students themselves, whereas the previous balloting was on problems of a national or international nature. Not only does it show that young people are interested in the problems which confront them as students, but it indicates that they have definite ideas on these problems.

In certain respects, the returns from the latest poll brought surprising results. To the question, In your opinion is the student who makes excellent grades more likely to succeed in life than one who does not? more than half of the students who replied, 55 per cent of the total, replied in the negative. In other words, if this poll represents an accurate cross-section of student opinion—as we believe it does—more than half of the high school students believe that there is no relationship between excellent performance in school and vocational success. To them, the quality of work one does in school, the grades one receives, have nothing to do with success in later life.

We believe this to be a mistaken view of what is perhaps the most important problem confronting young people; that is, finding and succeeding in a job. It is, of course, true that an occasional young person who has paid little attention to his studies and has made low grades in school will buckle down after leaving the classroom and really achieve success in his life's occupation. That a majority of them will, however, is not borne out by the available evidence. Those who have acquired habits of concentration, application, and industry while still in school are far more likely to be selected by employers in filling jobs and are far more likely to hold down the jobs they have received than those whose work has been slovenly throughout their school career.

It is undoubtedly true, as the poll indicates, that the athletic star with low grades is more popular than the nonathletic student with high grades, other things being equal. This is an unfortunate situation and represents a distorted sense of values, for it fails to take into account achievement in the activities which are most likely to contribute to success in life. The popularity which is showered upon athletic accomplishment is frequently so excessive as to lull the recipient into a sense of false security, from which he is bound to be jarred once he leaves the school.

Interest In Mexico Proves Strong Here

Social and Economic Influences Determine Relationship Between Mexico and U. S.

EXPROPRIATIONS CONTINUE

But Settlement Expected by Summer as Compromise Negotiations Make Progress

Almost a year has passed since the Mexican government expropriated (took over by decree) the oil properties belonging to British and American oil companies, valued by those companies at \$450,000,000, and by others at somewhat less than that figure. Although no decisive action has been taken by the British or the United States government, the controversy prompted by that act has not died down by any means. And during this last year the pros and cons of the Mexican expropriations have been bandied about a great deal. If any one conclusion may be drawn from these discussions, it is that there has been a great deal of interest aroused in the United States in the affairs of Mexico and its people. Expropriations are continuing, although on a small scale, as are conferences between the Mexican government and foreign corporations. Indications are that a settlement is in sight. But whether or not the whole question is laid to rest in the near future, as some think it may be, it seems likely that interest in Mexico will continue.

Importance of Mexico

There are several reasons which account for the importance of Mexico to the United States, of course, most of them obvious ones. Mexico holds a common border with us. With 16,552,000 people, she is numerically the largest of our near neighbors, her population exceeding that of Canada and Cuba combined. The fact that her frontiers enclose a vast area, one-third the size of the United States, lying between us and our vital canal at Panama, is of prime importance in itself. Whether there is a strong or a weak government in Mexico, and whether that government is friendly or hostile to Washington is a very important factor in the shaping of our own foreign policy.

Nor can Mexico avoid being greatly influenced by affairs in the United States, so closely integrated is her economic system with ours. Figures published by the Department of Commerce reveal that American investments in Mexico (concentrated chiefly in mining, smelting, and in the petroleum industries) amount to well over half a billion dollars. An overwhelming proportion of Mexico's foreign trade is carried on with the United States which supplies two-thirds of Mexico's imports, and absorbs more than three-fifths of her exports.

But there is yet something further that draws the interest of the United States to our neighbor to the south. Mexico is in a period of transition. Some people call it a peaceful revolution, and that is probably true, but the two words, revolution and Mexico, used together are apt to stimulate a mistaken picture of the traditional Mexican revolution—a brief but fiery melée of men and horses, clouds of dust, smoke, a few dozen gunshots and then someone new in the Presidential Palace. What is occurring south of the Rio

(Continued on page 3)

Facts About Magazines

IX. The New Republic

THIRTY years ago Herbert Croly published a book called "The Promise of American Life" in which he subjected American traditions and institutions to a searching and critical examination. His conclusion was that the more abundant life looked forward to by all could be attained only by sacrifice, and perhaps at the expense of some traditions previously held dear. This book exerted a strong influence upon liberal thought of that period, and upon such prominent figures as Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.



BRUCE BLIVEN
Editor of
The New Republic

In 1914, five years after "The Promise of American Life" was published, Croly and some other editors interested in an examination of American traditions in the light of rapidly changing conditions, founded a weekly magazine, and called it *The New Republic*. Neither in the early days of the magazine nor since were the editors selected for their oneness of opinion. On the contrary, the people whose names have been listed on the paper's masthead have often disagreed with one another. But, generally speaking, they were and are liberals, men and women whose cause was that of the underprivileged, the laborers, farmers, and the lower middle classes. *The New Republic* has had many distinguished names upon its editorial staff, such as Walter Lippmann, Francis Hackett, John Dewey, Rexford Guy Tugwell, Jane Addams, Waldo Frank, Gilbert Seldes, and many others. Some, like John Dos Passos, Stuart Chase, Maurice Hindus, and Sidney Howard, first became widely known through *The New Republic*. The present editorial board includes Bruce

in the January 23 issue of *THE AMERICAN OBSERVER*. They are, in fact, often coupled as the two outstanding liberal weeklies. Both are printed on the same kind of paper, they are about the same size, carry roughly the same amount of advertising and similar departments.

Like *The Nation*, a typical issue of *The New Republic* fills its first three pages with a series of brief comments upon various developments at home and abroad during the previous week. These paragraphs, which are the last to be written, are pretty well up to date. There follow generally two longer editorials.

The New Republic then fills in its remaining pages with three features by Heywood Broun, John T. Flynn, and an anonymous Washington correspondent called T. R. B., drama and movie reviews by Stark Young and Otis Ferguson, and a rather lengthy section on books. Its correspondence page is rather important, for many discussions prompted by a provocative main article continue on there for some time.

The main articles in *The New Republic* presuppose a general acquaintance on the part of readers with the rudiments of economics, history, and politics. The editors make no attempt at mass appeal, and although the cause of the workers is favored, the paper is probably read by few laborers. Although its circulation is not large (probably between 30,000 and 40,000), the paper is influential inasmuch as it goes to people who are generally in important positions, such as in colleges, government, and so forth.

Editors of *The New Republic* prefer to be considered "progressive" rather than liberal. They have supported many of the aims of the New Deal, although the paper backs no particular party. Its political position is somewhere left of center, although it has not always been constant. In its early days the paper backed Wilson, but broke with him over the Versailles Treaty. Throughout the 1920's it criticized very sharply the administrations of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover.

The New Republic is not a paper to be read lightly, and readers looking for relaxation will be disappointed. Its essays on economic theory, on literature and political developments call for concentration and a considerable amount of factual knowledge.

The New REPUBLIC

February 22, 1939

Writers and the Yankee Tradition

by Van Wyck Brooks

M-Day Man: Louis A. Johnson . . . Jon Mitchell

Popes and Politics Editorial

Spanish Refugees Betrayed Louis Guilloux

No Rubber-Stamp President Heywood Broun

Hitler Won't Drink Coffee T. R. B.

Rainer Maria Rilke Louise Hogan

FIFTEEN CENTS

(Reproduced through courtesy of The New Republic.)

Bliven and George Soule, two economists, Malcolm Cowley, literary editor, and Stark Young, literary and drama critic.

In many respects *The New Republic* resembles *The Nation*, which was discussed

The American Observer

A Weekly Review of Social Thought and Action

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"WE CAN SETTLE IT OUT OF COURT, JUDGE!"
(These two cartoons by Elderman in The Washington Post are reproduced in "Unions of Their Own Choosing.")



Two Experts Give Their Opinions About American Labor Problems

LABOR problems there have been in this country almost constantly from the earliest days of our national history. From the time the first trade union, a shoemakers union, was organized in Philadelphia in 1794 down to the era of the sitdown strike and the feud between the A. F. of L. and the CIO, the labor problem has been manifest in some form or other. The labor movement, itself, did not make considerable headway until the period following the Civil War, when large-scale industry was accompanied by a growing desire on the part of workers to organize themselves nationally to protect and promote their own interests.

At no time in recent years, however, has the whole subject of labor relations been more constantly in the public eye than during the present administration in Washington. The last few years have been a doubling of the number of union members, a greater interest on the part of government in labor problems, the enactment of a number of laws to guarantee collective bargaining through labor organizations and to help the laboring class in other ways, and finally the split in the labor movement which is today of such vital significance.

It is this growing interest in the labor problem which lends particular timeliness to two recent books on various aspects of the subject. The first is "American Labor" by Herbert Harris (New Haven: Yale University Press, \$3.75) and the second, "Unions of Their Own Choosing" by Robert

R. R. Brooks (New Haven: Yale University Press, \$3). Both are extremely readable and both have that necessary quality in dealing with a controversial subject of this kind of scholarly objectivity and impartiality. The books are in a sense complementary, for they deal with different aspects of the subject.

"American Labor" is a more general discussion of the labor movement in general. The author is a well-known authority on labor problems. He has been writing on the subject for the last 10 years. He begins with a brief history of the labor movement in the United States, giving a comprehensive background picture of the basic economic and social conditions which gave rise to trade unionism. As far back as the early part of the nineteenth century, American workers were developing a consciousness and seeking to improve their lot by organization. He tells of the activities of the precursors of the American Federation of Labor, which came into being during that hectic post-Civil War period.

One of the principal contributions of this book is the description which it gives of several of the outstanding labor unions. He covers the United Mine Workers, the union of which John L. Lewis is president, and tells of its pioneering activities in the field of unionism. He devotes an interesting chapter to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, whose activities extend far beyond the field of employer-employee relations, and is, in reality, a way of life. The railroad unions, the American Newspaper Guild, the United Automobile Workers, about which so much has been written of late, the textile unions; all are covered comprehensively and interestingly.

The second book deals with the work of the National Labor Relations Board, which was created as a result of the Wagner Act of 1935. The Board is undertaking to decrease the number of labor disputes and to guarantee to workers the right of forming unions for collective bargaining purposes. Many of its critics claim that it has had the effect of creating bitterness between employer and worker and of adding to the dissension already existing in the organized labor movement. However that may be, an impartial analysis of the Board's activities, such as that given by Professor Brooks, is highly salutary.

The author of this book undertakes to examine the record of the Labor Relations Board since its inception. He shows that of all the complaints brought before the Board, 95 per cent were settled informally; that is, without formal action having been taken against employers who allegedly were interfering with the right of workers to organize. He goes into the various charges leveled at the NLRB by both employers and by those who have charged it with favoring one labor organization against another. He makes recommendations for changes or amendments in the law. All in all, his book is a reliable study of this phase of labor relations, and the two works together form an excellent basis for an understanding of the entire labor problem.

With the Magazines

"Hitler Wasn't Bluffing," by S. Paul Johnson. *Saturday Evening Post*, February 18, 1939, pp. 5-7, 85-87.

The threat of Germany's air forces was not exaggerated during the Munich crisis, says this American aviation expert. After inspecting the new German planes and up-to-date manufacturing plants, he is convinced that Germany has more efficient planes and better-trained pilots than any other country in the world, and is equipped to increase production at the first mention of war.

"The Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism," by Alvin Johnson. *Survey Graphic*, February 1939, pp. 113-116.

Propaganda against Jews is on the increase in America now, this writer claims. In a recent study he found 800 organizations carrying out definite programs of anti-Jewish propaganda based on falsehoods. Describing anti-Semitism as a dangerous social disease, Mr. Johnson points out that in a democratic liberal state such as the United States this false movement must be stopped at the beginning, or it may prove an entering wedge for fascism later on.

"Firewalking," by Albert G. Ingalls. *Scientific American*, March 1939, pp. 135-138, 173-178.

The phenomenon of fire walking, as examined by scientists in this article, loses some of its mystery. In an experiment with native firewalkers of the Orient, the scientists found that the act is made possible by the thickened soles of the natives' feet, the brief contact

with the heat, and the poor conductors of heat that are used. The experimenters themselves were able to perform the task with little injury after practice. To anyone interested in superstitions and their origins this article should be enlightening.

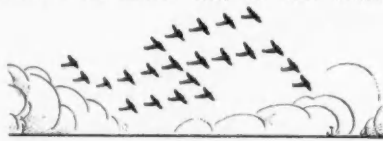


"The Catholic Church: Nazi Scapegoat Number Two," by S. K. Padover. *Forum*, February 1939, pp. 51-55.

German Catholics, reports this writer, are facing the same fate as the Jews. He cites newspaper articles from German papers showing that the process of uprooting the Church has already gone further than the outside world realizes. Everything seems to indicate that the government has already taken steps to stamp out the Church by throwing nuns and priests into concentration camps, killing Catholic leaders, and by wrecking Catholic homes. He believes confiscation of Catholic property will follow.

"Spanish Refugees Betrayed," by Louis Guilloux. *The New Republic*, February 20, 1939, pp. 68-70.

Writing from a camp for Spanish refugees in France, this French novelist gives a realistic picture of the plight of the human beings caught in the aftermath of the Spanish war. The refugees, he says, are forced to live in filth and misery, and have been shunted back and forth across the border under danger of bombing planes. He feels that the civilized world should help them.



Mexico's Economic Program Raises Controversy With U.S.

(Continued from page 1)

Grande today, however, is far more important and far reaching. All over that land there is movement. New forces are rising to displace the old. The balance of political, economic, and social power is shifting. Old problems and old evils are being removed, and others are rising to take their places. The expropriation decrees, which have attracted so much attention, are but one phase of this revolutionary movement, and should be considered in conjunction with the whole.

The Mexican Revolution

Mexicans who are politically or historically minded have a great deal to say about their revolution. Whatever act and whatever its consequences—he is likely to treat it in terms of the revolution. But from there on he is apt to be vague. Just what the revolution is or when it began is uncertain. Some claim it dates back to 1821 when Mexico threw off the Spanish yoke. Others place it in 1916 when the dictator Porfirio Diaz was overthrown and the new constitution adopted. Still others date it from 1934, the year that Lázaro Cárdenas was inaugurated as president.

But whenever the revolution may have begun, when Cárdenas assumed his office five years ago, he found a Mexico that had undergone very little social change in 400 years. The system that the Spanish *conquistadores* had set up in the sixteenth century still endured, even though obscured by surface changes. Before the Spaniards had come, Mexican society functioned on a basis of the village communities, or *ejidos*. The land was owned by the communities, not by individuals. But the Spaniards destroyed the *ejidos* by degrees, and they had never been reestablished. The Spanish rulers, of course, were driven out, as were the French after 1860. But the aristocracy remained, and little change for the better resulted, and

although the dawn of the twentieth century found great social progress in the United States, in Mexico 90 per cent of the land was still held by a wealthy few, and 97.3 per cent of the *peons* (peasants) owned no land whatever. Cárdenas decided to change that, and he has already gone a long way.

In the meantime he has been aided by another development—a sort of cultural renaissance in Mexico. The average Mexican is mostly of Indian blood. But there is also considerable Spanish blood in Mexico, and the two strains in combination produce a unique culture. The Mexican is not generally lazy. He has had to toil merely to live. But although it is hard work coaxing crops to grow from Mexico's parched soil, although he may have to fight as hard for water as some people do for food, he has never lost his sense of balance. Although his country offers him only the barest of necessities of life, it is beautiful and colorful, and the Mexican has a remarkable feeling for beauty. Somewhat of a mystic with a dogged faith in the dignity and mystery of the human spirit (centuries of oppression and spoliation notwithstanding), he has sought and found ways of expressing these feelings.

The Nation's Culture

In recent years there has been a veritable flowering of Mexico's unique culture. The products of Mexican artists have become very popular in the United States. The warm colors and the craftsmanship in Mexican pottery, tableware, tapestries have created a large market for them in



MEXICAN VILLAGE

Strongly marked contrasts are characteristic of the Mexican scene. The sun produces a warm medley of lights and shadows on the village street while often enough in the background tower the cold white peaks of forbidding mountains.

the United States where the influence of the Mexican-Spanish style of architecture has long been felt, particularly in the southwest. Such Mexican painters as Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco have been called north to paint murals on the walls of some of our own cultural centers. Mexican music, likewise distinguished for its warmth, simplicity, and color has become very popular. In recent years the Mexican composer and conductor Carlos Chavez has appeared with some of the larger symphony orchestras in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, where his expression of the Mexican Indian modes in music won considerable acclaim.

The immediate and pressing problems facing President Cárdenas, however, are not to be solved by a cultural renaissance.

An Indian himself, a former *peon*, he is determined to lay the groundwork for a prosperous and independent Mexico before his term expires in 1940.

Geographical Disadvantages

Mexico's basic problem is probably that of geography. The high, mountainous lands running down the center of the tapering isthmus drop off gradually on both sides toward the ocean, leaving much (perhaps half) of the land on a slant. Such rain as falls promptly dives underground and moves toward the sea in underground streams and rivers. There is so much space occupied by desert and mountains that only seven per cent of Mexico's land surface is arable—at present anyway. The result is that much of Mexico's population is concentrated in the Mexico City area and in the hot, lowland regions, along the seacoasts. In outlying towns water is so scarce as to be tragic. It is sold in the villages. At village railway stations, *peons* crowd around the locomotive begging for water. The cost of providing adequate water facilities for Mexico has been estimated at nearly \$200,000,000.

Since these geographical disadvantages can be overcome only slowly and at great expense, the most pressing problem has been to make the most of what good land and resources there are. To Mexican liberals, this means breaking up the vast haciendas of the landlords, and returning them to the communities. Such a principle has been on the statute books for more than 20 years, but until Cárdenas was elected, little was done about it. There was a tendency among Mexican liberals to wax wealthy and comfortable, upon achieving power, and to forget the people whom they represented. Cárdenas has proved an exception. Within the last four years about 17 per cent of the cultivable lands, or about 50,000,000 acres have been turned back to the communities. Up to the present, some \$25,000,000 worth of American-owned lands have been expropriated.

A similar program is in operation as regards the mineral wealth lying beneath Mexican soil. Under the Mexican constitution, this wealth belongs to all the people, and to no one else. This law was ignored so many times in the past, however, that most of Mexico's mineral wealth came under control of foreigners, particularly British and North Americans. Mexico contains valuable deposits of silver, copper, zinc, antimony, and lead. But it was over petroleum that the storm finally broke.

The trouble began when the big British and American oil corporations doing business in Mexico refused to comply with a supreme court decision ordering them to raise wages and employee benefits in Mexico. Cárdenas threatened to expropriate the wells if they did not. Various

(Concluded on page 7, column 3)

Improving the Quality of Our Local Government

ELSEWHERE in this issue of THE AMERICAN OBSERVER appears an article on boss rule in local government. Here we are giving a few suggestions as to means by which citizens, including students in the high school, may work to improve the quality of local government.

The first thing for them to get in mind is the fact that there cannot be good local government unless citizens who are public spirited and honest and intelligent take an active part in government. They must vote whenever there is a primary election in their voting precinct. They must be as active as the agents of the bosses are. They know that there are voters in their neighborhood who will sell their votes for gain, for office, or for favors. These votes must be balanced and overcome by bringing to the polls a larger number of citizens who are not looking for favors but who want their government to be clean and efficient. If citizens interested in these things are less active than the selfish interests are, there can be no improvement in government. Here, then, are a few questions which students may ask:

Where is the voting precinct located? What are its boundaries? How many voters are there in it? How many actually go to the polls every time there is a primary election to nominate candidates?

Talk with a number of people whom you know. Find out whether they vote in all the primary elections. Find out whether they are active in their own parties. Here are questions which you may ask of your friends or neighbors: Do you know who the leader or chairman of your party is in your voting precinct? Is he the man whom you would choose above any other? Did you help select him? If not, did you vote and work for some other candidate for his job? Do you contribute any money for the support of your party?

This last paragraph is important, for parties must have money in order to carry

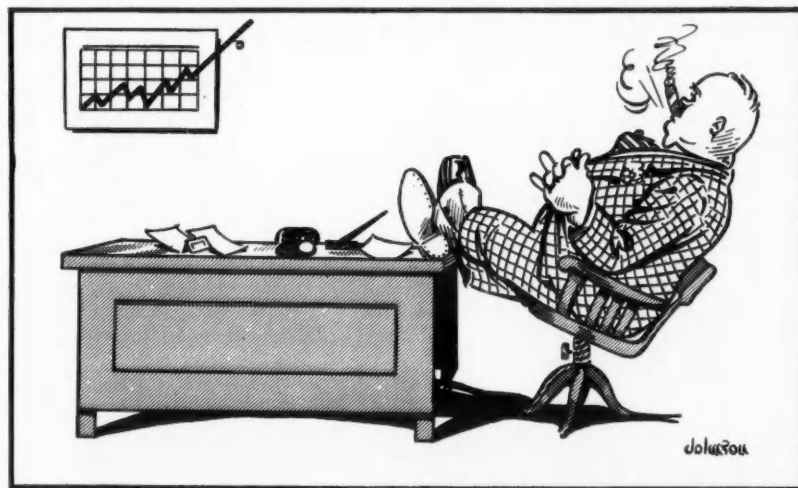
on their campaigns. They are likely to listen to the advice of the people who furnish them with the money. Ordinarily parties get their money either from candidates whom they elect to office or from corporations which are interested in certain kinds of legislation, or from law-breakers, illegal liquor interests, gamblers, racketeers, or others who want police protection. If these people give money to support a party, and if citizens interested only in good government do not make contributions, which class of citizens will exert most influence over the policies of the party which is in power?

Do not be overcritical of your local political leaders in the classroom. That would be untactful, and as a result of your comments, the charge might be made that the school was in politics. Your job should be to get information, to find out how things are going. Then, outside the classroom, you can talk and act, not as a student, but as an individual citizen, and

you may say whatever you please. But do not make it appear that your school or your teacher or your class is actively engaging in local politics.

You should also study the constitution or charter of your town. Study the form of government. What officers have the most power? Do you have a mayor and a council, and do they manage nearly all the city business? Or, do you have a city manager? If so, how is he selected and what are his duties? Do you have any sort of classified civil service in your city? Do employees of the city receive their jobs for life or for good behavior, or are they changed whenever one party goes out of power and another goes in? Is there any movement in your city in favor of the merit system of appointment?

For further information on problems of local government write to: National Municipal League, 309 East 34th Street, New York City; Public Administration Clearing House, 850 East 58th Street, Chicago.



THE BOSS



DOMESTIC

A black and white photograph of two young men in military uniforms. The man on the left is adjusting the collar of the man on the right. They are standing outdoors on a grassy field with trees in the background.

A black and white photograph of a two-story white house with a dark roof. The house has two windows on the front facade, one on each floor. To the left of the white house is a darker, possibly wooden building with horizontal siding. In the foreground, there is a dark, low-lying structure, possibly a shed or a small porch, and a dark, sloping area that might be a hill or a pile of earth. The background shows more buildings and trees, suggesting a rural or semi-rural setting.

A black and white photograph of a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is seated at a desk, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His hands are resting on a large sheet of paper on the desk. In the background, there is a framed picture on the wall and a bookshelf with several books visible on the left.

The CCC has planted trees, built dams and bridges, fought forest fires, strung telephone and power lines, cleaned up parks and for-

Home and Abroad

Are Doing, Saying, and Thinking



FSA PHOTO

THIRD OF A NATION . . .
A motion picture depicting the housing situation in the
Stettin has been produced.

ests, and carried out many other projects in conservation. Most of the men are between 17 and 23 years of age; they live in 1,500 camps scattered all over the country. Most of them come from families on relief, and all of them from families with small incomes. About 17,000 CCC members are war veterans. In return for their work, they are fed, clothed, housed, and paid \$30 a month. Most of this money must be sent back home.

Two bills dealing with the CCC were introduced in Congress recently. The first would make it a permanent organization; at present, it is still a temporary relief agency. The other would make it compulsory for the CCC to give each member from two to five hours a week of military training.



H. A. E.

RETIRED BUT ACTIVE

Justice Louis D. Brandeis, who retired from the Supreme Court a short time ago, is following his usual routine of life. He is shown here about to take his daily motor drive with Mrs. Brandeis.

FOREIGN

Anglo-German Armaments

In the five years from 1933 to 1938, the annual cost of the world's armaments increased 340 per cent—from about \$4,000,000,000 to \$17,500,000,000. Now, in the first months of 1939, this already amazing increase in the rate of armament production is being accelerated enormously. The British government has set the pace by announcing that this year it will spend the astronomical sum of \$2,900,000,000 on armaments alone. The keels of two new battleships are being laid, bringing the total number of capital ships now under construction in British yards to nine, or nearly as many as are being built by Italy, Japan, and Germany combined. The British armament program, undergoing constant upward revision, is laying a heavy burden upon British finances. Last summer it was announced that the method of payment would be a pay-as-we-go policy, but that seems to have been modified by a recent act of Parliament increasing the amount to be borrowed for arms from \$4,000,000,000 to \$8,000,000,000, or by exactly 100 per cent.

While news of this new program was being digested in London's financial district, a huge, 35,000-ton battleship slid down the ways of a Hamburg shipyard and plunged in a cloud of spray into the River Elbe. Named the *Bismarck* (after Germany's Iron Chancellor) by Hitler, it is the first in a series of super-battleships being built to challenge

Britain's supremacy on the high seas. At the same time, the German government announced a two-year program to modernize and widen the 60-mile Kiel Canal, which is as important to Germany as Panama is to the United States, since it permits the German fleet to be shuttled rapidly back and forth between the Baltic Sea, where it faces Russia, and the North Sea, where it faces Britain and France.

In order to put through this program, the German labor code is undergoing drastic revision. German men and women may now be compelled to work for indefinite periods. The wage scale is being reduced, and private employers are forbidden to lure workers with higher wages than the government is willing to pay. In nearly every country in the world, no matter how despotic the government, each individual has one liberty at least—the right to quit his job if he does not like it. According to the German periodical, *Dienst Aus Deutschland*, this right may be short-lived even in private industry in Germany, for permits may soon be required for workers who desire to leave their jobs in agricultural work, or in the mining, metal, building trades, and chemical industries.

France vs. Italy

The strange, three-way Mediterranean tangle among France, insurgent Spain, and Italy has neither unraveled nor improved during the last two weeks. Matters stand much as before. The war in Spain is not yet over, but the only obstacle in the way of loyalist surrender seems to be General Franco's refusal to guarantee that there will be no reprisals and no acts of vengeance.

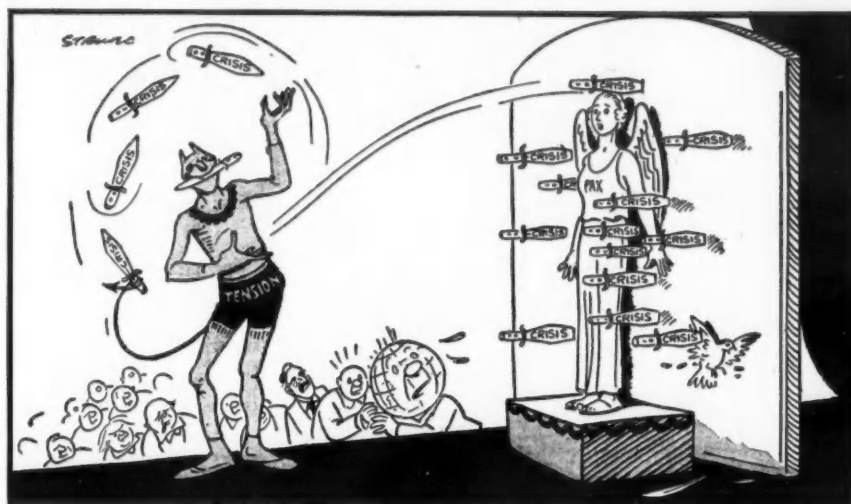
Although nothing has been admitted officially, all sorts of rumors are pouring out of Italy to disturb France. For instance, it is known that Mussolini has called a large number of troops to the colors. He has not denied it, but no official statement as to numbers or as to the reason they were called has been given. An Italian newspaper has reported that a conference to discuss fascist strategy will be held soon by Hitler, Franco, and Mussolini in northern Italy, but that report has not yet been confirmed. The press campaign against France goes on unabated, although it has not increased. Italian troop movements in Libya toward the frontier of French-controlled Tunisia have increased, there now being some 60,000 Italian troops along those borders to 35,000 French. The arrival in that region of Marshal Badoglio, Italy's most-experienced colonial officer, caused much conjecture as to what was being planned.

North of the Suez Canal, France found her troubles increased by a resignation of cabinet members from the government of Syria, a French mandate. Prominent Syrians intimated the possibility of a revolt if Syria's demands for independence were not granted.



BRITAIN'S ARP

Air Raid Precaution workers in England are shown testing one of the new steel shelters which are to be produced and distributed in mass quantities. A 30-foot wall was toppled on top of the shell to try its strength.



STRUBE, COURTESY WASHINGTON POST

KEEPING THE AUDIENCE ON THE EDGE OF THEIR SEATS

South of Suez, at the far end of the narrow Red Sea, France herself took the initiative by occupying a strategic, if desolate, area of stony desert commanding the straits of Bab el Mandeb. This territory was given to Italy by France in 1935, but since Mussolini has denounced that treaty, France has decided to regain what she gave up.

In the meantime it has become known that in spite of French Foreign Minister Bonnet's public utterances of his intention to defend every inch of French territory and to maintain a firm stand against Italian demands, his agents have been secretly negotiating with Italian officials for a settlement of Mussolini's demands.

Argentine Trade Cut

Argentina is not the largest country in South America, but it is probably the most influential and perhaps the most powerful from a financial and economic standpoint. It is far enough from the equator to enjoy a temperate climate over much of its area, and far enough from the United States to adopt independent policies of its own. Argentines apparently have felt it their natural function to resist too much domination of the Western Hemisphere by the United States, and to strive for some semblance of a balance of power, with the United States on the north end, and Argentina on the south. Thus they have tended to pursue a course that has not always been welcomed by the United States.

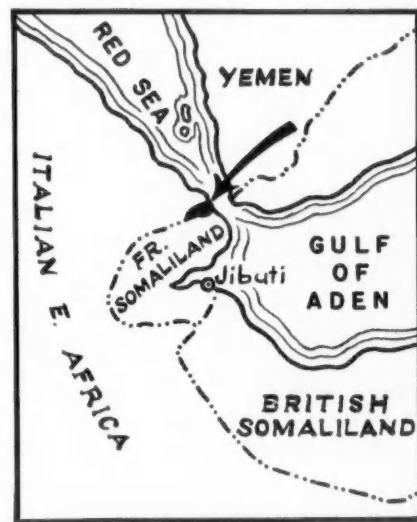
Recently this trend was emphasized by an announcement by the finance ministry of Argentina that from now on Argentina's trade with the United States must be balanced. Since the United States generally sells much more to Argentina than it buys from her, this means there will be a cut in Argentine purchases of North American products. The finance ministry has estimated it at 40 per cent. Some observers attributed this move to a somewhat arbitrary stand the United States has taken in refusing to admit Argentine beef. Purchases formerly made in the United States are now expected to be placed in England, the Argentine's largest customer, and Germany and Italy, which are eager to conclude barter agreements. Although this will come as a blow to American exports, there is probably considerable to be said for Argentina's stand. Officials have promised that if the United States increases its purchases in Argentina, they will increase their purchases in the United States accordingly.

Refugee Plans

After a long and hard series of conferences with German officials, George Rublee, the American chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, has returned from Berlin to London with a concrete proposal sponsored by the German government that looks to an exodus of 150,000 wage-earning German-Jewish refugees over a period of from three to five years. These people (all between the ages of 15 and 45) would presumably find employment, and eventually be able to send for their families and dependents, another 250,000. In the meantime, those left in Germany will be permitted to do enough business to keep alive, if they can find it. The exodus would be financed by a trust fund set up by the German government, made up of a quarter of the existing Jewish wealth in Germany. Suggestions have also

been made for an international corporation which would raise enough Jewish capital to finance the emigration and settlement. Although the German government apparently has no intention of allowing emigrants to remove funds, it may permit them to carry out German-manufactured goods, thus stimulating Germany's lagging export trade.

The new German plan is a decided improvement over the old, but it will probably not settle the refugee problem, even if adopted and carried out as it is. There are now loyalist refugees from Spain, Jewish refugees from Poland, the new Czecho-Slovakia, and Hungary. The stream is growing larger rather than smaller. Mr. Rublee has



JOHNSON

The arrow points to the small piece of territory adjacent to French Somaliland which France had ceded to Italy under the treaty of 1935. Italy recently denounced the treaty and in consequence France has retaken possession of the territory.

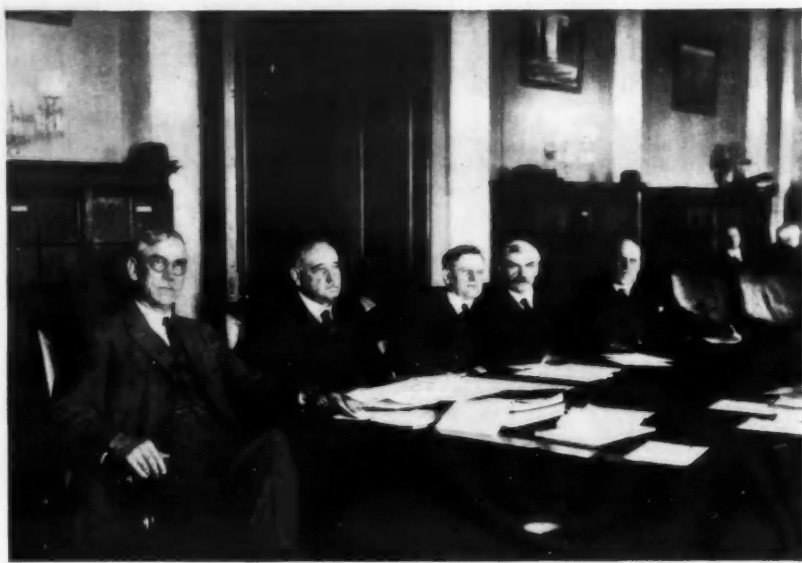
resigned his position, upon completion of his task, and has been replaced by Sir Herbert Emerson, a Britisher who now faces one of the most difficult problems of our times.

No Tyranny

A few weeks ago we mentioned in these columns a trend among Central American governments toward acts of questionable legality whereby the presidential terms were "extended" by politicians for the purpose of perpetuating administrations in power without resorting to elections. Such a trend, noticeable in three small republics, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and a possible fourth, Nicaragua, is gradually extending dictatorships in Central America.

Recently a decided exception to this trend was noted in Costa Rica, a small, tropical state of little more than half a million people, lying across the Isthmus of Panama between Nicaragua and Panama. In a forceful statement apparently made not only for internal consumption, but to set an example among his neighbors, Leon Castro Cortez, who was elected president of Costa Rica in 1936 for a four-year term, has refused to take advantage of a movement that would extend his administration, stating:

I will never unduly usurp sovereignty of the country and convert myself into a tyrant in violation of the laws and rights of my fellow citizens. . . . I will not prolong the term specified in the constitution. My refusal to run does not represent a sign of weakness, but of forceful conviction. . . .



THE TEAPOT DOME INVESTIGATION

One of the most famous of all congressional investigations. Seated fourth from left is Thomas J. Walsh, chairman, and guiding spirit of the committee which uncovered the oil scandals.

Historical Backgrounds

By David S. Muzzey and Paul D. Miller

The Investigating Function of Congress

DURING nearly every session of Congress—and frequently between sessions—congressional committees are busy investigating something or other. These committees may be the regular standing committees of either house, or special committees appointed for the purpose of carrying on a particular investigation, or they may be joint committees, composed of members of both houses. During the



DAVID S. MUZZEY

last few months, the activities of two such committees have been closely followed by the American people. The one is the Dies Committee, a House committee which has been investigating un-American activities, whose work was described in last week's issue of THE AMERICAN OBSERVER. The other is the so-called Monopoly Committee, a joint committee composed of members of both houses, which has been examining various aspects of the industrial organization of the nation.

An Old Practice

Congressional investigations of one kind or another are considered as much a part of the duty of Congress as the enactment of legislation and they are almost as old as the national government itself. There have been very few sessions of Congress during which some investigation has not been in process. The peak of such activities was reached during the administration of President Grant, when 37 different congressional investigations were carried on. At one time, the Senate was so busy with investigations that it had little time for regular legislative duties. In the middle of the first session of the Sixty-Eighth Congress (December 3, 1923, to June 7, 1924) 50 senators, more than half of the total membership, were engaged in the work of committees of investigation. Time and again, work was delayed on the floor of the Senate until sufficient members could be rounded up from the various committee rooms.

There has been much dispute during our history as to the value of congressional investigating committees. Many contend that they have been used to further the interests of various political groups and that they have not aided in inspiring constructive legislation or uncovering abuses of one kind or another. It has been charged that investigations have been used as "fishing expeditions"; that they have frequently been based upon insufficient and unreliable testimony; that they have used the tactics of an inquisition and

have served no other purpose than to stir up bitterness and ill feeling. More than a hundred years ago, Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri spoke of the "varieties of abuse" which characterized Senate investigations, "of which faction, favoritism, personal objects, ungovernable expenses, and little or no utility, constitute the heads."

Accomplishments

That there is a certain validity to these accusations, few impartial students of history would deny. Political parties have used investigations to enhance their own fortunes and to embarrass their opponents; they have resorted to sensationalism to capture popular attention. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the investigating function of Congress is a legitimate and an important one. As Woodrow Wilson declared: "It is the proper duty of a representative body to look diligently into every affair of government and to talk much about what it sees. It is meant to be the eyes and the ears, and to embody the wisdom and will of its constituents. . . . The informing function of Congress should be preferred even to its legislative function."

Despite the ridicule which has been heaped upon these "fishing expeditions," and despite the waste of time and money in certain cases and the partisan nature of certain investigations, most of them have performed a useful service. It must be remembered that it was largely as a result of a congressional investigation that the whole Teapot Dome scandal was brought to light and a number of culprits in government and out were brought to justice. Many of the most flagrant abuses in the conduct of business and finance have been uncovered by congressional investigations and remedial reform legislation has resulted from these activities of Congress. The investigative function of Congress has been used to check up on the administrative branch of the government, to make sure that laws have been administered according to the intention of Congress. A great deal of the progress which has been made in weeding out fraud and corruption in political campaigns and elections has been made largely as a result of such investigations. Recent investigating committees have shed much light on the activities of the munitions makers, the international bankers, on violation of civil liberties, and on the tactics employed to defeat labor unions. The evils of lobbying have been revealed through such investigations. Investigations into a dozen different fields have during recent years served as an invaluable aid in pointing to the need of legislative action to correct abuses.

Locate Yourself!

Types of Students and Analysis of Prospects

Type 19

THERE are a large number of young men in every high school who have a vague idea that they would like to have a business career of some kind, without any definite notion of exactly what they would like to do. This type of student would do well to consider the possibility of banking, not necessarily as a permanent career, but as a steppingstone to a general business career.

Few fields offer more valuable experience and training than banking. The young man who obtains a position in a bank and works there for a few years will have the opportunity to acquaint himself with many aspects of the business world, for banking is truly the hub around which all business revolves. If he is alert and industrious, if he has initiative and takes advantages of the opportunities afforded by employment in a bank, he will be in a position to hold down a good job in other lines of business after a few years.

Banking is one of those occupations in which one must truly start at the bottom. As a usual thing, a young man begins as a messenger or "runner" in a bank. Probably he will receive only \$40 or \$50 a month, perhaps even less. But even this lowly job will give him worthwhile experience, for he will have a chance to see how the bank itself operates, how business outside the bank is transacted. The work will be hard, but it will enable the young man to develop habits of strict accuracy, dependability, honesty, and industry, which will stand him in good stead in other occupations.

Most banks endeavor to give their employees a variety of experiences. From messenger one may advance to a bookkeeping position. He may then be promoted to teller, or be put in some special department of the bank, such as the mortgage or trust department.

Bank salaries are not high, except for those who rise to positions of responsibility. Bookkeepers and clerical workers may receive from \$75 to \$100 a month. Tellers and senior clerks make between \$35 and \$50 a week. An idea of the general salary range of bank workers may be seen from the fact that the average salary of all bank employees, other than executives, is \$28 a week. Many workers must spend several years in a bank before they receive as much as \$100 a month.

The student who is contemplating a banking career would do well to analyze himself and his qualities, to be sure that he has the necessary requirements. He must have a liking for figures, must be accurate, and above all must have those qualities of character without which a banking career is impossible.

Special attention should be paid to the courses one takes in high school. All courses relating to business should be taken; commercial law, typewriting, business machine operation, shorthand, money and banking, general economics; as many of these as are offered by the high school which he attends.



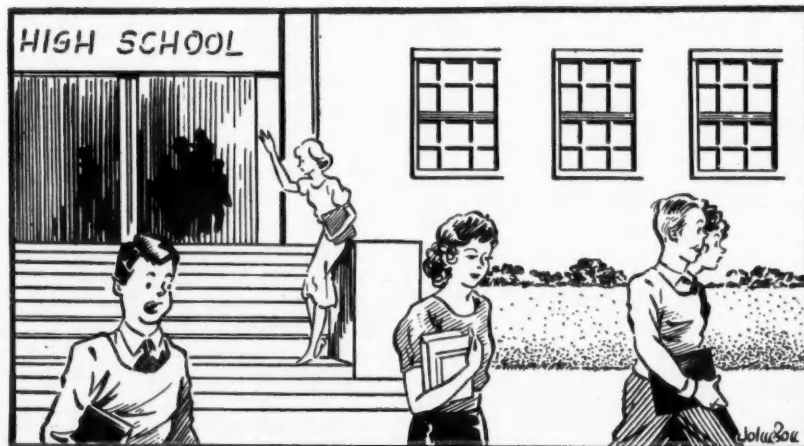
BANKING

(Courtesy Lincoln National Bank, Washington, D. C. Photo by Buckingham.)

Results of Student Poll

This week we are giving the results of the national student poll which appeared in the February 6 issue of THE AMERICAN OBSERVER and its sister publication, the *Weekly News Review*. Returns from more than 100,000 students have come into our offices which give a representative cross-section of student opinion on problems of immediate concern to them. Here are the returns on the various questions:

	Yes	No
1. Have you decided upon the vocation you wish to follow?	82,921 65.7%	43,349 34.3%
2. Have you been helped by any course you have taken in school to make up your mind about a vocation?	73,008 57.8%	53,262 42.2%
3. In your opinion, is the student who makes excellent grades more likely to succeed in life than one who does not?	56,480 44.7%	69,790 55.3%
4. Is an athletic star whose grades are low more popular among the students of your school than a nonathletic student with excellent grades, other things being equal?	91,886 72.7%	34,384 27.3%
5. Is there much cheating at examinations in your school?	51,477 40.7%	74,793 59.3%
6. If a student cheats in examinations, would you trust him in other matters?	48,027 38.0%	78,243 62.0%
7. Is there student government in your school?	56,285 44.7%	69,985 55.3%
8. Do you approve student government?	102,234 90.9%	24,036 9.1%
9. Do you do more work in any subject than is required simply because of your enjoyment of it?	78,969 62.5%	47,301 37.5%
10. Does your schoolwork help you to enjoy life?	102,530 90.9%	23,740 9.1%



Personalities in the News

RUNNING the largest city in the United States is a job for which Fiorello LaGuardia is admirably suited. The fiery, hard-working mayor has given New York City one of its best administrations, and New Yorkers showed their appreciation last summer when they elected him to a second four-year term.



H. & E.
FIORELLO H. LA GUARDIA

can consulate in far-off Budapest. Returning to the United States a few years later, he went to work as an interpreter on Ellis Island (he speaks Italian, German, Hungarian, Yiddish, and English). While working there, he went to law school. In 1910—then 28 years old—Lawyer LaGuardia began practice in New York.

The World War interrupted his progress as a lawyer, and he became Major LaGuardia, commander of the Eighth Aviation Force on the Italian front. Back in New York after the war, he ran for Congress. He served from 1919 until 1933 with the exception of one term.

While in Congress, Representative LaGuardia earned a reputation for aggressive, straightforward speech and action. His tempestuous orations on the floor of the House always attracted crowds; one day he waved a lamb chop in one hand and a steak in the other while protesting at the high cost of meat. Although he was elected as a Republican, he frequently voted with the Democrats or the progressives.

The Roosevelt landslide of 1932 swept Mr. LaGuardia out of Congress. Immediately a reform group in New York urged him to run for mayor. He had tried that once before, in 1929, and had been soundly beaten by "Jimmy" Walker. But he ran again, and this time successfully.

WHEN Miss Marguerite LeHand went to work as secretary to Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1920, she had no way of knowing that someday her employer would be chief executive of the United States. At that time Mr. Roosevelt was merely the defeated candidate for the vice-presidency. Miss LeHand had taken a stenographic job on the Roosevelt campaign staff, and her work had attracted Mrs. Roosevelt's attention. That led to the position as private secretary.



H. & E.
MARGUERITE LE HAND

At present, Miss LeHand is one of the President's trio of secretaries; Stephen Early and Marvin McIntyre are the other two. Of the three, she is the least known, but she is fully as valuable as the others. She relieves the President of a thousand details; she writes personal letters for him, looks after his accounts, buys his Christmas presents, helps with his stamp collection, and so on. Her little office is just off the President's large, oval room in the west wing of the White House, and more than one important official consults her before seeking presidential support.

"Missy," as she was nicknamed many years ago by the President's daughter, lives at the White House, in a small apartment on the third floor. When Mrs. Roosevelt is away from Washington, Miss LeHand supervises household affairs. She rarely goes out, but attends White House social functions. When the President travels, she goes along, except on the deep-sea fishing excursions.

She served the President through those long years when he was ill with infantile paralysis. In 1928, when Al Smith asked him to run for governor of New York, she advised against it, but went to Albany with the Roosevelts and worked harder, she says, than ever before or since.

LAZARO CARDENAS, the man who has undertaken to raise the millions of impoverished Mexican peons from the state of semi-servitude to which they have been confined for 400 years, comes himself from this class. And he has never been able to forget it. Today he refuses to live in the Presidential Palace in Mexico because it is too showy, and forms, perhaps, too great a contrast to the little house with a thatched roof and earthen floors in the village of Jiquilpan where he was born 43 years ago.

When he was 15 he left the farm to join the army of Francisco Madero, the man much loved by the Mexican people, but



H. & E.
LAZARO CARDENAS

hated by the conservative landowners because he proposed to introduce into the villages such radical innovations as sewage systems, schools, a water system, and a physician. Madero was murdered and his successful revolution overthrown, but Cardenas determined to carry it on. He rose rapidly through the ranks of the then corrupt Mexican army until he became general, governor of his state, and then finally, in 1934, president of Mexico.

Although many people oppose what they consider to be the radical program of Cardenas (some calling him a communist, others a fascist), no breath of scandal has been whispered about him personally—a rare happening for a Mexican president. Few Mexican politicians have shown less desire for private gain. Even his enemies generally admit him to be incorruptible.

ONE of the most delicate (and perhaps the most uncomfortable) positions in Europe today is that now occupied by Count Paul Teleki, who recently became premier of Hungary. As a nationally minded member of the Hungarian nobility, Count Teleki is committed to the defense of Hungary's integrity and independence. Yet he knows, and everyone else knows, that if Hungary really were independent, he would not be premier today, for his predecessor, Bela Imredy, was forced out of office by Nazi blackmail. First Imredy had been forced by Nazi pressure to adopt anti-Semitic measures in Hungary, and next he found those very measures turned against him, for Imredy was found to be one-fourth Jew.

What Count Teleki will do to stem the Nazi tide is now a moot question. During his 60 years of life he has had considerable political experience as a member of the



ACME
PAUL TELEKI

upper house in the Hungarian parliament and even as foreign minister and premier for a brief period in 1926. But his main interests in life seem to have lain elsewhere. He is well known as a scientific geographer who has lectured at the University of Budapest, where he was educated, and, most recently, as minister of education in Imredy's cabinet. He is also known as a Boy Scout leader, who organized the international scout jamboree in Budapest five years ago. Count Teleki is generally believed to be a mild-mannered man of a not very forceful disposition. It is thought that he intends to relax the anti-Semitic measures, but such a development would unleash a storm of Nazi wrath.



HACIENDA

PUBLISHER'S PHOTO

The wants of the Mexican peasant are few and his life in the midst of mountainous and barely possible territory is uncomplicated.

Mexico's Social Reform Program

(Concluded from page 3)

compromise plans were offered, but conferences failed and the wells were expropriated last March.

President Cardenas and his National Revolutionary party took a dangerous step when they decided on the expropriation decrees. What made it dangerous was the fact that although the Mexican government had the right to expropriate properties, the owners had to be compensated. Where was the Mexican government to find \$400,000,000 to pay for oil lands, plus \$25,000,000 to pay for expropriated farmlands? The simple fact was that it could not. But if it did not compensate the owners, then the act was not expropriation, but confiscation, which is not legal under international law.

Matters looked ugly for a time, and neutral observers could cherish little hope for Cardenas' revolutionary program. The British government demanded a return of the wells and a settlement of Mexican obligations so bluntly that diplomatic relations were broken off. President Roosevelt's good-neighbor policy was undergoing severe strain as heavy pressure was brought to bear upon the State Department to do something about the expropriations. A boycott of the "stolen" Mexican oil went into effect in United States, Britain, and Holland. American firms refused to sell oil machinery to Mexico.

What was more, matters were not going very well in the Mexican oil fields. The government labor unions had taken over the wells and refineries, but con-

siderable confusion and disorganization reduced production. The government was finding difficulty in selling oil abroad, and the revenues were dropping fast. Italy, Germany, and Japan were more than willing to buy, and eager to contract to take all the oil that Mexico could produce for export over a long-term period. But none of these countries was or is able to pay in cash, so no long-term agreements were concluded. Cardenas and his associates were caught in a delicate position. The oil companies refused to accept a share of the oil exports in payment for their losses. If the Mexican government backed down, there would be no hope for its program of reforms. If it did not, there was a strong danger that Mexico would come to depend upon the fascist powers and perhaps fall under their influence.

Such a possibility as the last was equally disturbing to the United States. Fortunately, some progress has been made toward a solution. In response to Secretary Hull's notes, President Cardenas has agreed to start payments on the expropriated farm properties soon. The oil companies and officials of the Mexican government are now carrying on conferences that look to a possible compromise solution under which a share of the Mexican oil exports will be turned over to the companies until adequate compensation has been made. If this compromise is reached by summer, as some observers now believe it will be, a delicate and disturbing factor will have been removed from Mexican relations with the United States.

Something to Think About

Are You Sure of Your Facts?

1. What is meant by the term "boss rule"?
2. List a number of ways by which local political leaders are able to maintain their control over local government.
3. Who is head of the Republican party in your community? Head of the Democratic party?
4. What is the difference between the expropriation of property and the confiscation of property?
5. What valuation have the oil companies placed upon their property which has been taken over by the Mexican government?
6. Who is Marguerite Le Hand?
7. What action has Congress taken recently with respect to national defense?
8. True or False: The population of Mexico is larger than that of Canada.
9. Who is the new premier of Hungary and why did his predecessor resign?

Can You Defend Your Opinions?

1. What action do you think should be taken in your community to improve the quality of its government?
2. What do you think would be the effect of putting all employees of state and local governments under the merit system of appointment?
3. Do you think the Mexican government has been justified in its seizure of property belonging to foreigners?

4. What action, if any, do you think the United States government should take against Mexico as a result of that country's recent policies?

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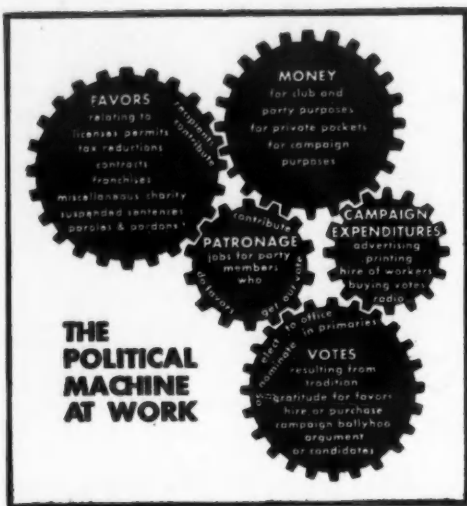
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PRONUNCIATIONS:

Francisco Madero (frah-n-sees'koe mah-day'roe), Porfirio Diaz (por-fee'ryoe dee'az), Lazaro Cardenas (lah'-sah-roe kar'day-nas), Diego Rivera (dee-ay'-goe ree-vay'rah), Jose Clemente Orozco (hoe-say' klay-men'tay oe-roe'skoe), Carlos Chavez (kar'loes chah'vayz), conquistadores (kon-kees-tah-doe'rays), ejido (ay-hee'doe).

The Old Problem of Inefficiency in Local Government

(Concluded from page 1)



(From a chart by Pictorial Statistics in "Government at Work." Harcourt, Brace.)

lic welfare. Rule by a few, rule frequently by a single dominating personality, is very common in American municipalities. It is referred to frequently as "boss rule," and it is to be found so frequently in America that it should be analyzed and understood by all thoughtful citizens.

A boss is a politician who controls a political "machine." If he is the boss of a city, his machine consists of a little army of followers who do his bidding and who control the votes of enough people to carry elections. The boss is the head of the party which ordinarily wins the elections in the city. If the city usually goes Democratic, he is the head of the Democratic party. If it usually goes Republican, the Republican leader is the city's boss.

This boss is ordinarily the chairman of the central committee of his party in the city. His machine consists of local henchmen who are under him. There is one of these leaders for each ward, and, under the ward leader, or ward "heeler," as he is often called, there is a leader or party captain in each precinct. The boss works through these neighborhood party captains. He distributes money to them and has them use it in such a way as to get their voters to the polls and thus control elections.

Political Favors

How does the boss control the city and maintain his power? Chiefly through handing out favors. His local captains do all sorts of things for the people of their precincts or neighborhoods. They get city jobs for a good many persons. Most of the cities do not have the merit system. The jobs go to people who give the local bosses their support in return for appointments. Jobs on the police force or in the fire department or in the street-cleaning departments are given out, as well as higher clerkships, and still higher positions in the various city departments.

Local captains perform many other services. If a man in the neighborhood is unfortunate enough to get into police court, the local political captain goes to the prosecuting attorney and appeals for his release. If a family is in distress, baskets of food are sent.

In return for all these favors, there are a number of voters in every voting precinct who will go to the polls regularly and vote for the candidates recommended by the local captain. And, of course, he recommends the candidates approved by the city boss. These people who vote, not because of conviction but because they are under obligation to the boss and his machine, are not actually in a majority in any voting precinct. If all the voters in the precinct went to the polls, the ones who are under the thumb of the boss would be outnumbered. But most of the people do not go to the polls at primary elections—the elections at which party candidates are nominated. If a man has no obligation to discharge, if he has no axe to grind, if he is an ordinary citizen mildly interested in good government, the chances are that he stays at home on the day of the primary

election. This means that the persons whom the boss and his machine round up in the various precincts of the city are ordinarily a majority of those who vote. At least, there are enough of them to assure the victory of the boss' candidates in the primary election.

When such a situation prevails, the boss and his machine nominate and usually elect the city officers. They have complete control over the city government. Probably a majority of citizens do not like the machine, but there is nothing they can do about it unless they go to the polls on primary day and vote. And in most cities such citizens will not do this.

Getting the Money

But now we come to an interesting question. How does the boss get enough money so that he can hand out favors so extravagantly? It costs a great deal to do all the things which have been mentioned. It is an expensive business to buy up or bribe by favors enough voters to turn the tide of elections. How can the boss and his machine afford to do it?

The answer is that they find it possible to take in an unbelievable amount of money. Sometimes the boss or the politicians who control the city make it a practice to extort money from the people to whom they give jobs. If they have a good position in the city government to fill, they may make the man to whom they give the job pay them \$100 or as much as \$500. In some cities, the police officers accept bribes from persons who have been arrested, and in return for the bribes the officers drop the charges against them. This happens in the case of traffic offenders and in the case of more serious offenders as well. The officers then pass on the bribes to "men higher up." Those in charge of the government may exact fees from gamblers and racketeers and other criminals, and, in return, see to it that these lawless people are not prosecuted. This is a very fertile source of funds for corrupt machines.

There are many other ways of getting money. The city may open a street or develop a certain section, and in return the real estate company or companies which are benefited may make a handsome contribution. Contracts may be let for public buildings, and the contractors may be paid more than their work is worth, and the surplus above a fair price for the work may be turned over to the boss. In one Ameri-

can city the boss owns a distillery and sells his liquor at a very high price. Many night clubs find it pays to buy this liquor at outlandish prices because if they bought another brand, they might be prosecuted and their places closed.

Graft and Corruption

When government is carried on in this way, gambling, racketeering, and many other kinds of crime are protected and the city suffers. The government is wasteful and the taxes are high. It is not to be assumed, of course, that the government is bad in every way. If it were, long-suffering and patient citizens would at last rise up and revolt. The bosses frequently handle certain departments of the city government quite well. One noted boss, who rules his city almost like a European dictator, has a very efficient fire department. Under his direction, the city appropriates a great deal of money for the schools. There is a fine hospital service. In another boss-ruled city, the traffic control is superb and accidents have been drastically reduced. In another there is an excellent park system and broad boulevards have been opened, just as they have been, by the way, in Berlin under Hitler's rule.

Because, outwardly, boss-ridden cities sometimes (though by no means not always) show evidences of being well managed, many citizens who are reasonably public spirited are inclined to sit back inactive, ignoring the wastes and extravagances and high cost of government, ignoring the fact that certain kinds of crime prosper and that the city lacks the essentials of democracy.

Whole Nation Suffers

The whole nation is affected by the corrupt or inefficient government of cities and towns. The national government itself is degraded. High officials of the nation and the states are influenced by the local bosses. When, for example, a president of the United States wishes to appoint to high office a man from a particular city, he is usually obliged to appoint the man who is recommended by the local boss. He cannot offend the local political gang, for it controls the votes of the city. If the president displeases them and they turn against him, he cannot carry the city. If he displeases bosses in cities throughout the country, he will lose national elections and go out of office. If, on the other hand, he gives favors to the bosses, they will

get out the vote for him and he will stand a better chance of remaining in office.

A president or a governor may dislike the local bosses. They would prefer to ask advice of the respectable lawyers or doctors or editors or teachers of the community. But these respectable, public-spirited citizens do not deliver votes as the bosses and ward heelers do. Hence national leaders who wish to remain in power are frequently obliged to make common cause with local political machines. These local politicians of unsavory reputation in this way exert an influence over national politics. National politics cannot rise much above its source, which is to be found in the cities and towns and villages and counties of the land. If democracy in the nation is to be improved, the good citizens of every section must improve it in their neighborhoods.

Another Evil

Boss rule and the spoils system of appointments to office have this further evil



DRAGGING IN THE VOTE

JOHNSON

influence: When they prevail, young men and women looking for careers find it undesirable to seek public employment in their towns and cities. They will not look for a job in a municipal department if they can possibly find one in private industry. This deprives the public of their services and it closes a door of opportunity in the faces of conscientious young people looking forward to careers.

From every standpoint, it is extremely dangerous for people to relinquish their democratic privileges and be content with boss rule.

Smiles

Reporter: "Here's a correspondent who wants to know how long girls should be courted."
Editor: "Tell him just the same way as short girls."
—MONTREAL STAR

Jack: "Funny no one seemed to realize what a bad egg he was while he was rich."
Jim: "My dear fellow, a bad egg is only known when it's broke."
—WALL STREET JOURNAL

The new detective was telephoning headquarters.
"The man I'm trailing has left Boston for New York," he explained. "Shall I start after him today or wait for the excursion rates on Saturday?"
—NORTH WIND

Professor (to freshman entering class late): "When were you born?"
Freshman: "April 2."
Professor: "Being a little late must be a habit with you."
—THE TEACHER

The youthful graduate from agricultural college looked rather scornfully at the old farmer.

"Your methods of cultivation are hopelessly out of date," he said with a superior air. "Why, I'd be surprised if you got 10 pounds of apples from that tree."

"So would I," replied the farmer. "It's a pear tree."
—WALL STREET JOURNAL

"What is your occupation?"
"It isn't an occupation, it's a pursuit. I'm a bill collector."
—WALL STREET JOURNAL

Big Game Hunter (in Africa): "My gosh! Cannibals!"

Wife: "Now, dear, don't get yourself in a stew."
—FOAM



"IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU, I'D RATHER HAVE THE MICE"
BEAVER IN COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

Our blonde stenographer said her trip to the dentist to have a wisdom tooth pulled would have been a success if the dentist had not changed forceps in the middle of a scream.
—MARY MCKITTRICK

First Freshman: "I wonder how old Miss Jones is."

Second Freshman: "She must be awfully old, because I heard she used to teach Caesar."
—CAPPER'S WEEKLY

Head Grocer (making up the wholesale order for the week): "John, do we require any new-laid eggs?"

Assistant: "No, sir. We have enough in the store-room for another six weeks."
—KENTISH MERCURY

Man (leaving streetcar): "This car service is abominable, always overcrowded."

Conductor: "Didn't you have a seat?"

Man: "Yes, but my wife had to stand up all the way."
—GLASGOW CITIZEN

"Why haven't you pressed your trousers?" roared the sergeant-major.

"I had them under the mattress all night, but I'm such a light sleeper," replied the recruit meekly.
—TAPS

Teacher: "If a farmer sells five bales of cotton at \$60 a bale, what will he get?"
Pupil: "A used car."
—SELECTED